

## FEMA Defends Amateur Radio Frequency<sup>1</sup>

Federal Emergency Management Agency  
Washington, DC 20472

IT-OM-TL

August 1, 1996

Secretary  
Federal Communications Commission  
Washington, DC 20554  
Reference No. ISP-96-005, IWG 2A

Dear Mr. Secretary:

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is the lead agency for emergency planning and response activities in the Federal Government. FEMA is the Executive Agent for administering the Stafford Act, PL. 93-288 as amended, for coordinating the Federal response to catastrophic disasters. As such, FEMA is responsible for coordinating overall Federal planning for, and response to, natural disasters and most man-caused disasters in the United States. Under the provisions of Executive Order 12656, FEMA is responsible for coordinating National Security Emergency Preparedness programs and plans among Federal departments and agencies; coordinating the development of plans, in cooperation with the Secretary of Defense, for mutual civil-military support during National Security Emergencies; and in guiding and assisting State and local governments in achieving preparedness for National Security Emergencies. FEMA also establishes policy and guidance for, and provides assistance to, State and local governments in the coordination of emergency preparedness and response, recovery, and mitigation activities as well as the development and operation of telecommunications and warning systems.

It is our understanding that the above working group has proposed that the 144-148 MHz and 420-450 MHz Amateur Radio bands be considered for use in expanding the Mobile Satellite Service.

Amateur Radio operators have a history of supporting State and local government emergency operations by providing communications. This support is provided through

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.fema.gov/library/fcc.shtm>

formal organizations such as the Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service<sup>2</sup> (RACES) program and the American Radio Relay League's Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) program as well as thousands of local ham clubs. Many of the local communities served by these Hams have extremely limited resources and would be without a backup communications system were it not for the Hams. The services provided by these Hams often involves life threatening situations.

FEMA has been in contact with our State and local emergency management partners throughout the nation. It is our belief that authorizing the mobile satellite service to operate on the above mentioned Amateur bands will seriously degrade their ability to support their public safety requirements. We strongly urge the Commission to remove these Amateur bands from further consideration.

Sincerely,

(Signed)

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Paul K. Reid, Jr.

Frequency Manager

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.fema.gov/library/civilpq.shtm>